

REMARKS

The application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated December 11, 2007. Claims 1-18 are pending in this application, with claim 1 being in independent form. By the present Amendment, claim 2 has been canceled and claims 1, 3-8 and 11-18 have been amended. It is submitted that no new matter has been added and no new issues have been raised by the present Amendment.

Claims 1-7 and 15-18 were objected to for formal matters. In addition, Claims 1-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as allegedly indefinite. Without conceding the propriety of these objections and rejection, the claims have been carefully reviewed and amended with particular attention to the points raised in the Office Action. Withdrawal of the objection and rejection of the claims are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly obvious from U.S. Patent 5,996,513 to Nanbu et al. in view of U.S. Patent 4,829,915 to Ahm. Applicants have carefully considered the Examiner's comments and the cited art, and respectfully submit independent claim 1 is patentable over the cited art, for at least the following reasons.

Independent claim 1 relates to a machine for bedding out seed or plant tapes includes a frame and a carrying pole to be connected to a front of a tractor frame. At least one bedding out unit is provided with a plough member mounted on the frame. The plough member is associated with a conveyor including at least one continuous belt. The bedding out unit is provided with a supporting plate for supporting at least one supply container for the seed or plant tape to be bedded out in a furrow produced by the plough member. The bedding out unit includes a plough member of a

substantially U-shaped cross section. Top webs of the U are substantially horizontally projecting stabilizing webs. The plough member is of a length (L) of at least approximately 30 cm and a width (b) measured across the U of 15 to 50 mm. The conveyor of the plough member is formed by an inclined main conveyor with two continuous conveyor belts arranged adjacent, but with a distance (a) to one another. The main conveyor extends over most of the entire length (L) of the plough member. The supporting plate is adjustable with respect to at least one of height and angle, and at least two pressure wheels are mounted on a rear end of the machine for pressing down the earth around the seed or plant tape portion which has just been bedded out in the furrow. A pre-conveyor is provided between the supporting plate for the supply container and the main conveyor. The pre-conveyor is adapted to run at a speed slightly slower than a speed of the main conveyor. The pre-conveyor is mounted on a slide reciprocable in the longitudinal direction of the machine. A pair of co-acting separation rollers is mounted between the main conveyor and the pre-conveyor, a peripheral speed of the separation rollers corresponding substantially to an advancing speed of the main conveyor.

Nanbu et al., as understood by Applicants, relates to a machine for transplanting seedlings. A gear ration of a power transmitting mechanism 86 is selected so that the first and second conveyors 55 and 56 rotate at the same velocity. In addition, the first and second conveyors 55 and 56 carry the seedlings 8 at the same speed as the displacement of the body 10 of the machine (col 8, lines 23-29.)

However, Applicants find no teaching or suggestion in Nanbu et al. of a pre-conveyor adapted to run at a speed slightly slower than a speed of the main conveyor or that the pre-conveyor is mounted on a slide reciprocable in the longitudinal direction of the machine. In addition, Applicants find no teaching or suggestion of a pair of co-acting separation rollers mounted between the main conveyor and the pre-conveyor, a peripheral speed of the separation rollers corresponding substantially

to an advancing speed of the main conveyor, as recited in independent claim 1.

Ahm relates to an apparatus for transplanting tapes containing plants. Ahm was cited as allegedly disclosing pressure wheels substituted for pressure plates, etc. However, Applicants submit Ahm provides none of the above-noted elements missing from Nanbu et al., that would have made the claims obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art.

Accordingly, Applicants submit independent claim 1 is patentable over the cited art.

The Office is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees that may be required in connection with this amendment and to credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a petition for an extension of time is required to make this response timely, this paper should be considered to be such a petition, and the Commissioner is authorized to charge the requisite fees to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a telephone interview could advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

Entry of this amendment and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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